



WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL

AVIAN BIRD INFLUENZA PANDEMIC
PLANNING GUIDE FOR BUSINESS
CONTINUITY
AND
CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT



Waitakere City Council
Te Taitoko o Waitakere



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1.0 Introduction

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned that the current risk from avian influenza ("bird flu") becoming the next human influenza pandemic is high. The Ministry of Health (MoH) is currently updating its pandemic influenza plan and is leading government-wide work to prepare for a possible pandemic in New Zealand. More information about the characteristics of pandemic influenza is contained in Appendix 1.

Table 1 outlines the five stages of MoH's pandemic influenza management strategy as well as the "alert codes" that will signal a shift from one stage to the next. In October 2005, New Zealand is in Alert Code White. Moves from Code White to Yellow, and Yellow to Red (i.e. the escalation steps) will originate with MoH. The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) will endeavour to keep infrastructure providers informed of these changes.

Table 1
New Zealand Ministry of Health Strategy for Pandemic Management

STAGE	NEW ZEALAND STRATEGY	MoH / DHB ¹ ALERT CODE
1	Plan for it (Planning)	WHITE (Information/advisory)
		YELLOW (Standby)
2	Keep it out (Border Management)	RED (Activation)
3	Stamp it out (Cluster Control)	
4	Manage it (Pandemic Management)	
5	Recover from it (Recovery)	GREEN (Stand down)

This Planning Guide sets out a range of information, aimed primarily at companies that provide infrastructure services in the energy, communications, transport, and water and waste sectors ("Infrastructure Providers"), that may be helpful in planning for the impact of a possible influenza pandemic on their employees and their business. This Planning Guide:

- Briefly describes the New Zealand Government's actions to manage any future pandemic;
- Contains some strategies for businesses to manage these impacts, including ideas about how to:
 - maintain essential activities;
 - contain / minimise the spread of infection in the workplace;

¹ DHB = District Health Board.

2.0 Waitakere City Council Workplace and Business Continuity Influenza Pandemic Planning Guide

Important note:

The workplace in this example involves all facilities and employees of Council that provide a service to the community of Waitakere City including the Civil Defence Emergency Management Emergency Operating Centre.

2.1 Aims and Objectives of Planning Guide

The planning guide aims to manage the impact of influenza pandemic on employees and business via the health impacts on two main strategies:

- 1) Containment of the disease by reducing spread within Council Facilities; and
- 2) Maintenance of essential services if containment is not possible.

This plan provides information on the following:

- 1) Communication
 - a) To Council from external or internal sources regarding pandemic phases
 - b) Within Council
 - c) To employees
- 2) Containment Activities
 - a) Reducing risk of infected persons entering Council premises
 - b) Social distancing
 - c) Cleaning
 - d) Managing fear
 - e) Management of cases at work
- 3) For Travellers
 - a) Travel advisories
- 4) Treatment
 - a) Anti-viral medication
 - b) Influenza vaccine
- 5) Maintenance of Essential Business Activities
 - a) Identification of core people and core skills
 - b) Business planning for absence
 - c) Communication
 - d) Knowledge Management
 - e) Short, Medium and Long Term Planning

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2.2 Background Information

Influenza pandemics with novel viruses are recurring events, are unpredictable and result in serious health effects to large proportions of the population, with significant disruption to social, economic and security concerns of the community.

The recent appearance of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus A / H5N1 has raised concerns that this virus may mutate to create a novel virus capable of causing a significant global influenza pandemic.

Predicted spread and virulence:

- Illness rates in population: 20-50%
- Mortality rate: Current rate for avian flu is 50%
- Global deaths: 2-50 million
- Global spread in: 3 months
- Vaccine availability: 6 months after initial outbreak
- Anti-viral treatment: Will be available for front line and persons who become ill as a part of their normal work activity and it may not be affective in all cases

Potential Effects:

- Widespread disruption to business: 20-60% of working population unable to work for 2-4 weeks at the height of a severe pandemic wave. Each wave may last about 8 weeks
- Significant death rate – loss of people and expertise
- Loss of emergency and essential services – fire, police, health services, air traffic controllers
- Loss of other services – retail, transport, government departments, etc.

Effect for Business:

- Loss of people to operate the normal business activities of Council (either temporary or permanent)
- Loss of services from suppliers
- Support services (e.g. IT and call centre) will be affected

3.0 Health Management Plan

Note:

All essential job positions should be identified with a view to being the minimum staffing necessary to continue essential services in case of illness or unavailability for other reasons of the nominated people.

3.1 Communication

3.1.1 To Waitakere City Council from external or internal sources regarding pandemic phases

New Zealand Government Communication

- 1) The designation of global phases is made by the Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- 2) The Ministry of Health (MoH) leads the New Zealand government's planning and response to pandemic influenza.
- 3) A health technical advisory group provides advice to the Ministry of Health.
- 4) Communication of the New Zealand situation with regard to the pandemic and the response will be via a variety of sources:
 - a) Pandemic Phone line
 - i) Free pandemic national phone line 0800 number (planned to use the Ministry of Health emergency phone line).
 - b) Website www.moh.govt.nz (Ministry of Health) for current status, fact sheets and FAQ, general information on vaccines, medication and treatment guidelines.
 - c) Travel Advice
 - i) MFAT (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) will provide travel advice (www.mfat.govt.nz).
 - ii) Those returning to NZ may be required to undergo additional screening and quarantine, and maybe also be subject to exit screening at their point of departure.
 - d) Civil Defence Emergency Management www.civildefence.govt.nz for all emergency management pandemic advisory information

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- 5) The Official's Committee for Domestic and External Security Co-ordination (ODESC) will advise government on appropriate responses, including:
 - a) Exercise of powers under the Health Act 1956 and the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, and
 - b) Communication strategy.
- 6) The New Zealand Government response will be coordinated through the CIMS structure (Co-ordinated Incident Management System) and the District Health Board major incident and emergency plans and regional incident co-ordination plans.
- 7) Steps for escalations of the pandemic plan will originate with the MoH. The MoH will advise the Intersectoral Pandemic Group and at the same time put the notification on their website and into their media contacts. The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) (www.med.govt.nz) will also take reasonable steps to ensure that relevant infrastructure providers are aware.

3.1.2 Council Communication with Health Professionals

- 1) The Business approach to the influenza threat is to align with Ministry of Health recommendations and to avoid causing unnecessary panic.
- 2) The Council's primary communication channel will be the health website at www.moh.govt.nz in conjunction with the Waitemata District Health Board Pandemic Plan and principal advisor Dr Jocelyn Peach.
- 3) Specific professional information for Business health practitioner(s) will also be made available both through this website and through direct communication.
- 4) The Manager – Emergency Management is responsible for notifying the CEO and Crisis Management Team Recovery Manager of any changes to current planning arrangements or significant information received from the Health Professionals.

3.2 Within Council

3.2.1 Within Lines of Business in New Zealand

- 1) Notification of change in Alert Code (escalation of pandemic) will come from MoH on its website and through their media contacts.
- 2) The issue will be escalated to the CEO or delegate for a decision regarding activation of the CMT, business continuity plans and the influenza planning guide.

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- 3) The decision will be made in conjunction with the Crisis Management Team Recovery Manager (CMTRM) and Local Civil Defence Controller.

Note: The potential for infection amongst staff must be considered before any team meeting.

3.2.2 Health Response Communications

- 1) The Human Resources Health And Safety Advisor will be responsible for coordinating health communications to all staff in conjunction with the CMT directive.
- 2) Communications will be made via email and telephone.
- 3) Communications will include nominated back up people.

3.3 Communications to Employees

- 1) Communications to employees will be managed as per Unit Business Continuity Plans and section managers.
- 2) This will be via email, internet and intranet website, telephone or radio.
- 3) Instructions regarding information numbers to call, and the centre for reporting problems or concerns will be used.
- 4) Unit Health and Safety representatives (Influenza Managers) will be responsible for activating unit cleaning procedures as required and in accordance with this guide.

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4. Containment Activities

4.1 Reducing risk of infected persons entering the site

- 1) A list of worksite "Influenza Managers" (Unit H&S reps plus alternates) is to be maintained by the HR Health and Safety Advisor with copies to the Director Quality Assurance and Manager Emergency Management. Influenza Managers will initially manage any health related activities within units as required by the CMTRM. Upon notification from the CMTRM, nominated Influenza Managers for each location will do the following:
 - a) Set up prominent notices at all entry points to facility, advising staff and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.
 - b) Set up Key General Infection Control (basic hygiene and hand hygiene) notices around workplace (including entrances, notice boards, meeting rooms and toilets).
 - c) Ensure they have adequate supplies of tissues, medical and hand hygiene products, cleaning supplies as well as masks and latex gloves.
- 2) The CMTRM will ensure that employee communications include pandemic influenza fact sheet and information on general Infection Control Notices and Social Distancing.

Note: Notices for display are as shown in the Appendices attached.

4.2 Social distancing

- 1) Social distancing refers to strategies to reduce the frequency of contact between people. Generally it refers to mass gatherings but the same strategies can be used in the workplace setting.
- 2) Information on social distancing will be sent by email by the CMTRM.
- 3) Where operationally practicable, teams are encouraged to split into different work locations to build up back up and avoid cross infection.
- 4) Where operationally practicable, a shift system should be encouraged and managed as follows: when one shift goes off duty, there should be an interval before the next shift begins so that the worksite can be thoroughly ventilated (either opening all doors and windows or turning up air conditioning system).

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- 5) Social distancing strategies include:
- a) Avoid meeting people face to face – use the telephone, video conferencing and the Internet to conduct business as much as possible – even when participants are in the same building.
 - b) Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone non-essential meetings / gatherings / workshops / training sessions.
 - c) If possible, arrange for employees to work from home or work flex hours to avoid crowding at the workplace.
 - d) Avoid public transport: walk, cycle, drive a car or go early or late to avoid rush hour crowding on public transport.
 - e) Bring lunch and eat at desk or away from others (avoid the cafeteria and crowded restaurants). Introduce staggered lunchtimes so numbers of people in the lunch room are reduced.
 - f) Do not congregate in tearooms or other areas where people socialise. Do what needs to be done and then leave the area.
 - g) If a face-to-face meeting with people is unavoidable, minimise the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least one meter away from each other if possible; avoid shaking hands or hugging.
 - h) Encourage staff to avoid recreational or other leisure classes / meetings etc. where they might come into contact with infectious people.

4.3 Cleaning

- 1) Workplace cleaning should be stepped up during the pandemic period.
- 2) Filters of the air conditioning systems should be cleaned and anti-bacteria solution applied.
- 3) Telephone sets and computer keyboards in common areas should be cleaned daily.
- 4) Anti-bacteria solutions should be applied to all common areas, counters, railings, washbasins, toilet bowls, urinals and septic tanks (where these are present) daily.

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5) Details of suitable cleaning solutions can be found in table below.

Disinfectants	Recommended use	Precautions
<p>Sodium hypochlorite:</p> <p>1000 parts per million of available chlorine, usually achieved by a 1 in 5 dilution of hospital grade bleach.</p>	<p>Disinfection of material contaminated with blood and body fluids.</p>	<p>Should be used in well-ventilated areas.</p> <p>Protective clothing required while handling and using undiluted bleach.</p> <p>Do not mix with strong acids to avoid release of chlorine gas.</p> <p>Corrosive to metals.</p>
<p>Granular chlorine:</p> <p>e.g. Det-Soi 5000 or Diversol, to be diluted as per manufacturer's instructions.</p>	<p>May be used in place of liquid bleach, if it is unavailable.</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>
<p>Alcohol:</p> <p>e.g. Isopropyl 70%, ethyl alcohol 60%.</p>	<p>Smooth metal surfaces, tabletops and other surfaces on which bleach cannot be used.</p>	<p>Flammable and toxic. To be used in well-ventilated areas. Avoid inhalation.</p> <p>Keep away from heat sources, electrical equipment, flames, and hot surfaces.</p> <p>Allow it to dry completely, particularly when using diathermy, as this can cause diathermy burns.</p>

4.4 Managing Fear

- 1) It is likely there will be anxiety regarding the pandemic situation and this is likely to contribute to increased work absence and/or increased distress to staff.

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- 2) The suggested ways to manage this is to:
 - a) Have communicated the possibility of a pandemic and the Business's preparedness to manage it very early to staff.
 - b) Have a comprehensive management plan in place which is clearly communicated to staff.
 - c) Provide clear, timely and proactive communications to staff when things are changing.
 - d) Provide clear communications on how the Business is handling the situation if the pandemic does occur.
 - e) Provide back up assistance for counselling staff through Human Resources and the EAP service.

4.5 Management of cases at work

Influenza Managers will put up posters giving information on what to do if people get sick at work.

The CMTRM through the Waitemata DHB Health advisor will access latest MoH advice regarding managing staff that become ill, contact definition and contact management from their website and modify the process outlined below as appropriate.

As directed by the CMTRM, the Human Resources Health and Safety Advisor will send out emails to all staff regarding what to do if people get sick at work including key message: if they feel unwell, don't come to work.

If a person feels ill, or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of influenza at work, they are to contact their Influenza Manager by telephone if at all possible.

Actions to follow:

- 1) Should avoid visiting this person if it can be avoided – manage the process over the phone.
- 2) Check if the employee has any of the symptoms outlined in the symptoms poster.
- 3) If the employee does *not* have any symptoms like those listed, they are very unlikely to have influenza, and should be reassured but advised to call their GP or advertised medical help numbers for advice.

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- 4) If the employee does have symptoms that match any of those listed, they should be treated as a “suspect case.” The Influenza Manager should note personal details of the suspect including details of any staff and/or visitors the person has been in recent contact with. This information will permit the CMTRM and Human Relations H&S Advisor to monitor staff whereabouts and well-being during the pandemic.
- 5) The suspect case should be issued a surgical mask and instructed to wear it immediately. This is to help protect other staff.
- 6) The suspect case should leave work immediately and be advised to go home and to contact their GP **by telephone** for a review. They should not use public transport if at all possible.
- 7) The manager of the suspect case should be informed that they have left work.
- 8) Contact management – the Unit Influenza Manager will
 - identify contacts (once an employee is suspected to be infected);
 - advise contacts in person that they have been in contact with a person suspected of having influenza; and
 - Ask contacts to go home, and stay at home until advised otherwise.
- 9) The suspect case’s work station should be cleaned and disinfected, as indicated in the section on Workplace cleaning.
- 10) Return to work of the suspect case and their contacts:
 - Advise staff member on how long to stay away from work (the Ministry of Health website will have advice on this once the characteristics of a pandemic are known)
 - Check on the staff member during his/her absence from work. This will facilitate treatment, contact tracing, etc., if they become ill.
 - Staff are to have medical confirmation that they are well prior to their return to work.

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5. Travellers

5.1 Travel Advisories

- 1) New Zealand travel advisories are communicated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (www.mfat.govt.nz).
- 2) Warnings about travel should be communicated to all employees.
- 3) As a rule of thumb, any form of travel by staff within New Zealand or overseas should be avoided during the pandemic stage.

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